

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1611
F76F
Cop. 2

FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Foreign Agricultural Service Washington D.C.



U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

JUL 24 1964

CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

BEANS
FDP 3-64
June 1964

MADAGASCAR LIMA BEANS

Quoted verbatim herein is a report on lima bean production and trade in Madagascar. It was prepared by William R. Hatch, the U.S. Agricultural Attache at Nairobi, Kenya. Madagascar is among Mr. Hatch's areas of responsibility.

Lima beans (*phaseolus lunatis*) are produced in Southwestern Madagascar on the alluvial plains of the Onilahy, Fiherenana, Mangoky, Morandava and Manombo Rivers. All of the beans are grown fairly near the coast, as the type of weather there is considered necessary to produce a quality product. The entire production is also on irrigated land. Plantings occur in January and February, and the height of the harvest occurs in September. The crop has about a 220-day maturing season. Four to 6 seeds are planted in each hill; these are placed from 5 to 15 feet apart, depending on the quality of the soil. It is the policy to raise a short growing season crop, such as corn, between the rows. These can be harvested before the beans fully cover the ground.

Preparation of the ground is done by either tractor or oxen, depending on the size of operation and financial position of the farmer, but the rest of the operations are performed by hand. In all, there are about 23,000 acres planted to this crop. With the development of a large irrigation project on the Mangoky River, the area in lima beans could be substantially increased if market conditions justified the expansion.

Production of lima beans in recent years has varied between 12,000 tons and 20,000 tons. Recent figures follow:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Production in metric tons</u>	<u>Exports in metric tons</u>
1961	17,000	15,523
1962	15,000	12,181
1963	18,000	9,347
1964	15,000 - 20,000	--

The market is weak at present, but because of poor and limited storage, all stocks have been shipped. There are now about 6,000 tons on the way to the United Kingdom. In addition, there are still sizable stocks there, including some of the 1962 crop.

Beans are separated into four grades for export:

Extra

Must be white mature beans with no insect infestation or foreign matter. Tolerance for broken beans is 1 percent, that for wilted beans, 2 percent. The maximum tolerance for seed turning black after cooking is 2 percent.

Superior

Tolerance 5 percent broken or wilted and 1 percent foreign matter.

Usual

Tolerance of 12 percent broken and total tolerance 25 percent, including broken, wilted, foreign matter, etc.

Broken

This includes any beans, whole or broken, that do not qualify for the other grades.

Practically no extras are packed, but the bulk of the crop -- about 70 percent -- is graded superior, 20 percent usual, and 10 percent broken.

When prepared for export, the beans are packed into 50 kg. bags (about 110 pounds). The crop is purchased by small traders -- most of them Asians -- who in turn sell to larger merchants. There may be as many as four or five middlemen before the merchandise reaches the exporter, who is also an Asian. The competition is keen, particularly on selling, often resulting in cut-throat tactics. The grower is usually the one who suffers, and who is required to pay for the many steps in this marketing. There are 19 recognized exporters. Most of the beans are shipped on consignment.

The principal ports of export are Morombe, Tuléar and Morondava. Exports from these ports for 1961-62 are:

<u>Port of export</u>	<u>1961 metric tons</u>	<u>1962 metric tons</u>
Morombe	10,330	6,332
Tuléar	4,435	4,542
Morondavo	771	116

The best quality beans are grown in Morombe, but traders mix the produce until it is difficult to distinguish them. The tendency is to be as near the minimum requirements in any grade as is safe.

The principal market is in the United Kingdom, which will absorb about 10,000 tons per year. This product is used there mostly by Welsh miners, and there appears to be very little elasticity in the demand. When beans are scarce the price is good, but limited surpluses can cause a sharp drop. Limited quantities of lima beans have also been shipped to France, Australia, Japan, United States, Reunion, and Mauritius.

Prices of beans have varied considerably from year to year, but prices of \$182.000 to \$224.00 per ton, c.i.f. U.K., are considered normal. The following table gives prices in the United Kingdom by year, from 1953 to 1964:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price range in dollars per metric ton</u>
1953	185.00 - 232.50
1954	185.00 - 224.00
1955	173.50 - 187.50
1956	196.00 - 240.75
1957	210.00 - 260.50
1958	215.50 - 224.00
1959	204.50 - 212.75
1960	196.00 - 210.00
1961	224.00 - 271.50
1962	252.00 - 336.00
1963	196.00
1964	112.00-present price

The present low price, and stocks on hand, are causing concern, and attempts are being made to increase consumption and create new markets. Trials have been made to introduce a canned lima bean with sausage into Germany. So far, this does not look promising. Attempts are also being made to produce a bean flour to be mixed with wheat flour in manufacturing of breads and cakes. Such flour has about 18 percent protein and 6 percent sugar content.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Official Business

NOTICE

If you no longer need this publication,
check here ☐ return this sheet,
and your name will be dropped from the
mailing list.

If your address should be changed, print
or type the new address on this sheet
and return the whole sheet to:

Foreign Agricultural Service, Rm. 5918
U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C. 20250.